

HANDS OFF

Our favourite *Sex and the City* girl, Kristin Davis, shares on her passion for the African elephant and her work with the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust



I first fell in love with Kenya in 2001, but it wasn't until a chance encounter with an orphaned elephant in 2009 that I came to know and love The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust. I was visiting a Maasai Eco-conservation group in 2009, when we heard about a baby elephant wandering alone around a Maasai village. We knew the elephant would not survive long on her own without her mother's milk, so we dedicated ourselves to finding her. With luck and perseverance, we found her on time. We contacted The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and they organised to transport her to their nursery in Nairobi National Park.

The Trust was started by a remarkable woman named Dame Daphne Sheldrick. She has dedicated her life to rescuing orphaned elephants and raising them to live in the wild again. They named the baby we found Chaimu. With their love and expert care, Chaimu miraculously survived and she is currently living free and happy with her new elephant family in Tsavo National Park.

Despite this success, Chaimu is now faced with the danger of being killed for her tusks. Illegal poaching of elephants is rampant and happening in all areas where they still roam in the wild. The consumer demand for ivory is driving a horrific poaching epidemic that is brutally killing one elephant every 15 minutes! At this rate of killing, elephants will vanish from the wild in 10 short years. Many of


the people driving this black market for ivory are international crime syndicates, war lords and terrorists who only want to perpetrate more crimes with the money they make from the sale of the illegal ivory.

I have come to deeply love the elephants I have met and observed at the Trust. In many ways they are so much like humans. Most impressive may be their ability and willingness to learn to trust humans again after the brutal death of their mothers by poachers.

We must act now to save this majestic animal from extinction. Wouldn't it be horrible if we have to explain to our children that the elephants they love from their story books no longer exist? But unlike the dinosaurs that have gone extinct, it would be purely from human greed that elephants are gone?

"What can I do?" you may be thinking. First, never buy ivory. Without demand, there is no value. Also, tell everyone you know what is happening to the elephants; if people don't know about this crisis, they can't take action to stop it.

And a way that you can be a part of the healing of the baby elephants left behind is to foster an elephant at The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust. I do this every year for all of the children in my life (and also for many adults). They receive updates every month on their adopted elephant. It's a wonderful way for them to learn about the details of an elephant's life, and it connects them to something outside of their normal world. If you ever travel to Kenya, visiting the Trust's nursery in Nairobi is a life changing experience.

I am so honored to be a part of the work the Trust does. I love to share my pictures and stories about my elephant friends. For more information go to www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org or follow me on Twitter or Facebook @ KristinDavis or @DSWT. 

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